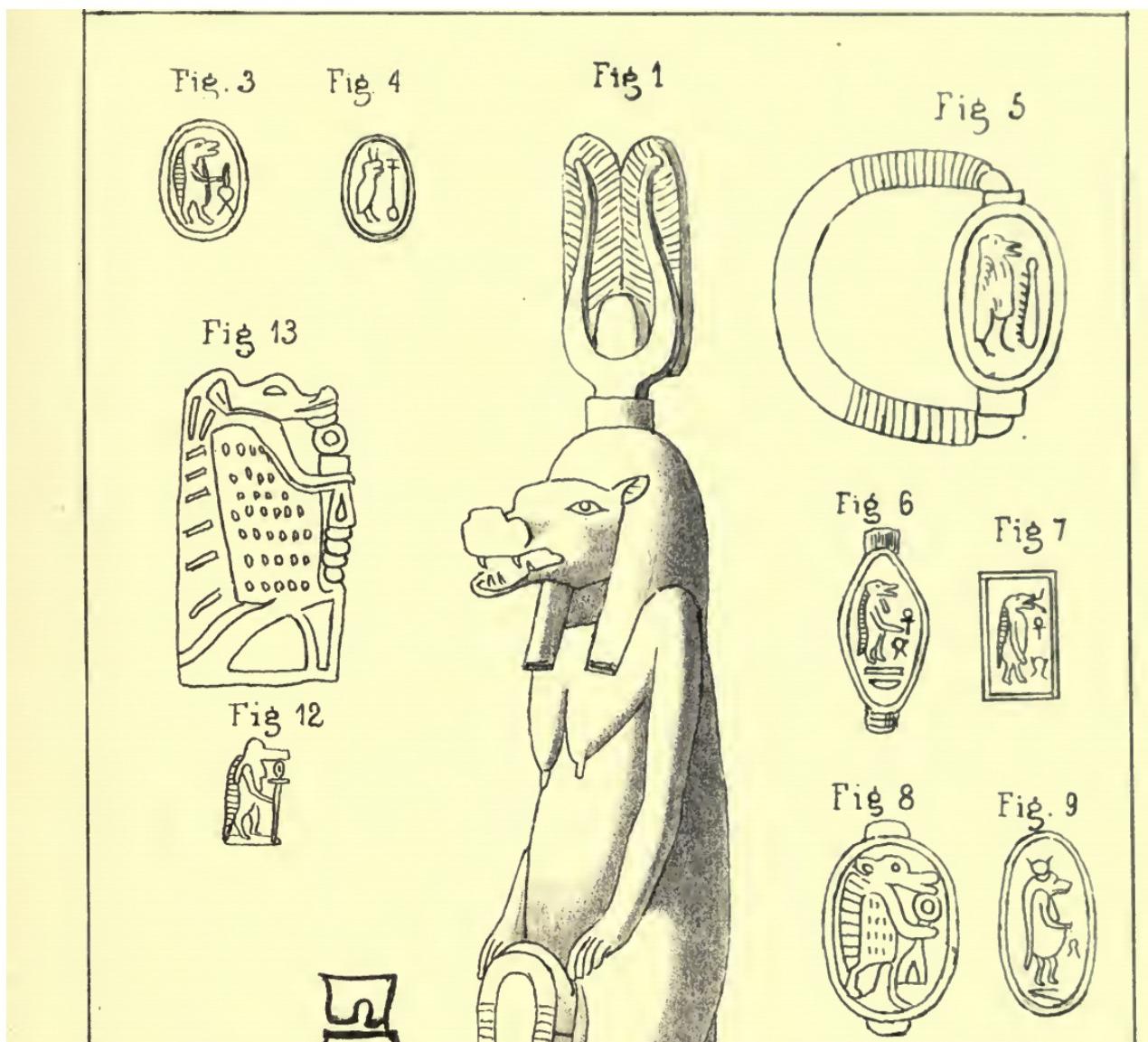
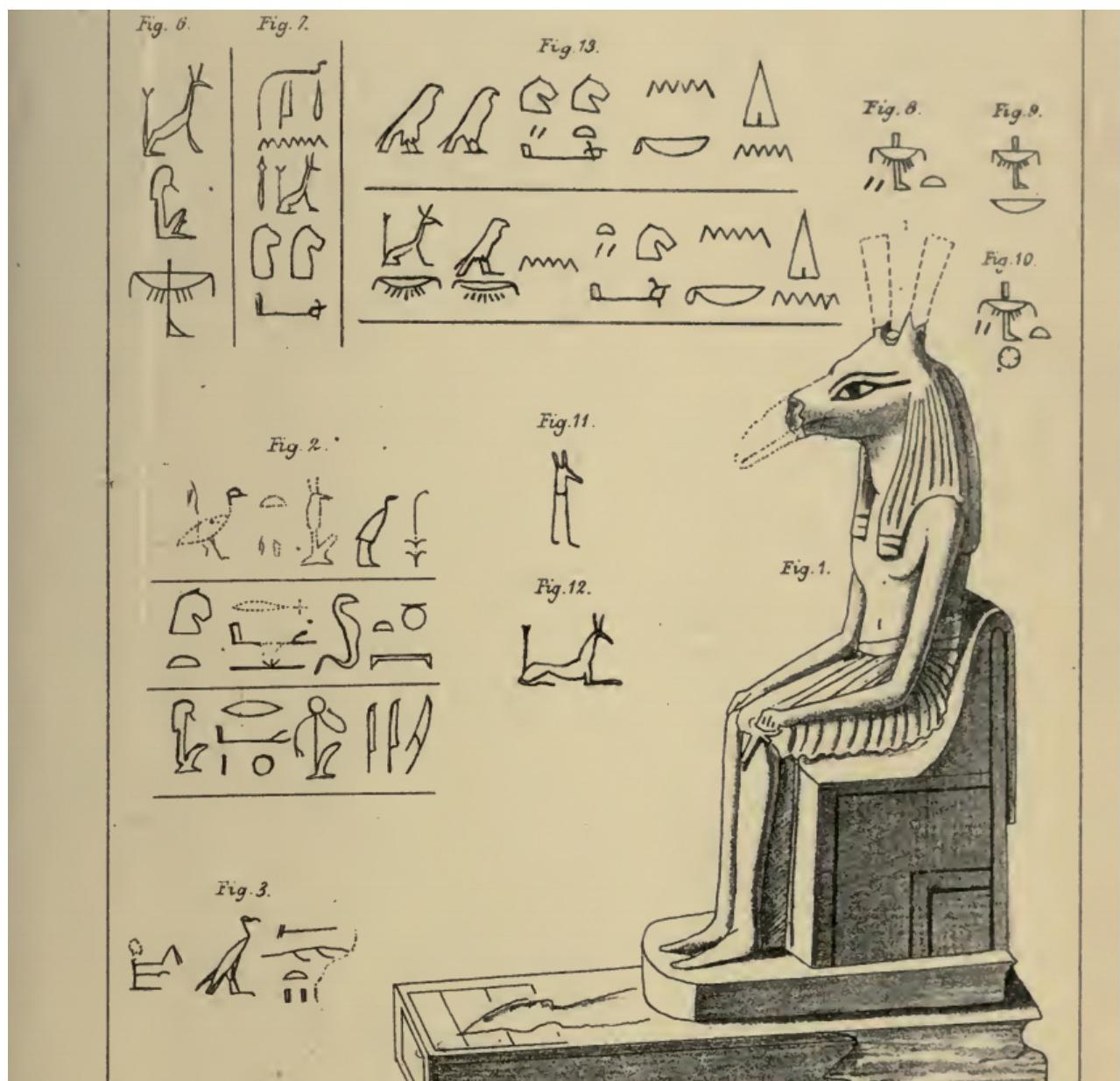


Ancient Egypt:
'The Second Intermediate Period' or
The Second 'Interregnum':
The War between the Theban Egyptians and the Hyksos:
Reminiscences and Legends from Greco-Roman Times
Pertaining to the 'Exodus' of the Amu (Aamu) from Avaris or
('Ramesses'),



**Their Leaders, Their Religious Beliefs and Their Refuge in
the Highlands of Palestine/Canaan/Retjenu,
*as related by***
**Plutarch (c. 46–119 A.D.), Priest of Apollo at Delphi,
and**
Strabo of Pontus (c. 64 B.C.–21 A.D.), the Geographer



This e-book contains a careful selection of excerpts from Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris* (p. 8) – particularly excerpts of some relevance to the question of the religious beliefs of the Amu ('A'amu/Aamu) and their "Hyksos" monarchs, the "Expulsion" or "Exodus" of the Amu from Avaris (the fortified city in Lower Egypt; in the eastern part of the Nile Delta), the identity of "Moses", the founding of the City of Jerusalem, etc. It also includes parts of book 16, chapter 2 of Strabo's *Geography* – the chapter describing Phoenicia (the Levant), Judea, Moses and "the Jews" (p. 31).

This document was first published online by the undersigned, Edmund Schilvold, in February 2025.

Additions to the text of the original translation, and to the excerpts in the appendix, have been put within {curly brackets}, and have sometimes also been marked with the initials of the undersigned, i.e. with "E.S.", for the sake of clarity.

Any **emphasis** is always an added one.

Front page illustration: A copy of a part of Plate VII in Willem Pleyte's *La religion des pré-Israélites* [the Religion of the Proto-Israelites] (1862). Its main feature is a drawing of a rather grotesque creature with a head resembling that of a pig; this is a statue of the deity Thaoeri or Thuoeris, the consort of Seth or Typhon. The explanatory text for this "planche" in Pleyte's pioneering work is as follows:

PLATE VII.

Fig 1, 3—14. These figures are copied from the edition of the monuments of the Leiden Museum by Dr. Leemans. Fig I. Drawing after I. A. fig. 1208, plate XV. The text says:

Thaoeri, Thuoeris, concubine of Typhon, represented by the female hippopotamus, standing on her hind legs with a hairdo of two cow horns, the solar disk and two palm leaves. The back is covered with a crocodile tail.

Fig. 2. Hieroglyphic group taken from Mr. Wilkinson's manners and customs etc. II series giving the phonetic signs sch. p. u or o = Schepo. The signs t and the egg are used to indicate the female sex. (Pleyte, 1862, p. 251)

This rarely-mentioned pig- or hippopotamus-like “concubine” of Seth–Typhon is also mentioned in the lists of artifacts found in *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum* (London, 1846):

Div. 4. Hippopotamic deity, seated; her hands on her knees. Wood. 1 ft. 4 ½ in. h. Thebes.

Ta-ur, in profile. Ebony. 9 ¼ in. h.

Typhon, standing, full-face. Ebony. 9 ¼ in. h.

Pasht, seated, lion-headed; her throne placed upon two Asiatics and two Ethiopians. 8 in. h. Vitrified stone.

Typhon, Seth, ass-headed, seated. Wood painted with bitumen. 1 ft. 3 in. h. Tombs of the kings, Thebes.

A tortoise-headed deity, seated. Wood covered with bitumen. 1 ft. 3 in. h. Tombs of the kings, Thebes.

(...)

Ta-ur, Thaoeri, or Thoueris, hippopotamus body, standing, lion-headed, human breasts, the back covered with a crocodile’s tail, the hands holding a peculiar kind of collar.

Calcareous stone. 2 in. h.

(...)

Fragment, Typhon and **Ta-ur or Tanr, or Teoeri.** Yellowish green porcelain. 1 5/8 in. h.

Typhon, full-face, standing, between two figures of Ta-ur, or Thuoeris. Beep blue porcelain, 7/8 in. h.

Ta-ur, Thaoeri, or Thuoeris, hippopotamus standing on its hind legs, with pendent arms and breasts of a female, the back covered by the tail of a crocodile. Stone, porcelain, &c. From 4 to 5/8 in. h.

Te-oer, with female head. Blue porcelain. If in. h.

Fragments of a gorget, on which are Typhon, Teoeri, lion’s head, camelopard, frog, and jackal-headed sceptre. Ivory. 6 ¼ to 5 in. 1., 2 ½ to 1 ½ in. b.

(pp. 137–138, p. 158)

As we can see, this strange female deity was known as **Ta-ur (Egyptian), Tanr (Egyptian), Thaoeri (Greek?) and Thoueris (Latin)**. These names raise the question: Was Tanis, the ancient city in Lower Egypt, the “sister-city” of Avaris, as it were, named after Her?

Second page illustration: A copy of a part of Plate III in the same book, displaying a drawing of a statue of the enigmatic “Seth-animal”. The follow is the explanatory text for this third of the “planches”:

PLATE III.

Fig. 1. Representation of the small statue of Set preserved in the museum of Leiden, reduced to half its size.

Fig. 2. Inscription a little mutilated above the chair of the statuette, we begin to read on the right side:

Suti-se-nut-Uraeus-aa-peh.

Suti, son of, Nut, the immortal, great, vigilant

mei-Ra.

beloved, of Ra.

Fig. 3. The end of the line fig. 4. Inscription on the base we read:

Naschti hor, the deceased.

Fig. 4. The legend reads:

Suten-ta, hotep-Seti-se-nut-Uraeus.

Royal, offering, to Set, son of Nut, the immortal.

Fig. 5. Another part of the inscription on the base reads:

Suten-Ta, hotep-Seti-aa-peh-nuter-aa

Royal offering, to Set, the great, vigilant, god, great,

Suten hert-neb-nrau

King, Heavenly, Lord, of victories.

Fig. 6. Noeb. Name of Seth. Denkmaler III, 122 a.

(Pleyte, 1862, p. 246)

Introductory quotes:

"Horus: pacifier-of-the-Two-Lands, the Perfect God, 'Akenen-re, may he live.
(This is) what he made as his monument for his father, [Seth] lord of Avaris,
when he placed all lands under his feet."

Inscription on offering table found in the ruins of Avaris (Redford, 1997, p. 7)

"Horus: pacifier-[of-the-Two-Lands ...], Son of Re, **Apopi**, given life.
[He made it as his monument for his father Seth (?), making] for him
many flag-staves and a fixture (?) of bronze for this god."

Inscription on a piece of a building (Redford, 1997, p. 7)

Excerpts dealing with Seth, called Typhon by the Greeks/Hellenes, from Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*

Commencement of direct quotes

22 Many things like these are narrated and pointed out, and if there be some who think that in these are commemorated the dire and momentous acts and experiences of kings and despots who, by reason of their pre-eminent virtue or might, laid claim to the glory of being styled gods, and later had to submit to the vagaries of fortune, then these persons employ the easiest means of escape from the narrative, and not ineptly do they transfer the disrepute from the gods to men; and in this they have the support of the common traditions.

The Egyptians, in fact, have a tradition that Hermes had thin arms and big elbows, that **Typhon was red in complexion**, Horus white, and Osiris dark, as if they had been in their nature but mortal men. Moreover, they give to Osiris the title of general, and the title of pilot to Canopus, from whom they say that the star derives its name; also that the vessel which the Greeks call Argo, in form like the ship of Osiris, has been set among the constellations in his honour, and its course lies not far from that of Orion and the Dog-star; of these the Egyptians believe that one is sacred to Horus and the other to Isis.

(...)

25 Better, therefore, is the judgment of those who hold that the stories about Typhon, Osiris, and Isis, are records of experiences of neither gods nor men, but of demigods, whom Plato and Pythagoras and Xenocrates and Chrysippus, following the lead of early writers on sacred subjects, allege to have been stronger than men and, in their might, greatly surpassing our nature, yet not possessing the divine quality unmixed and uncontaminated, but with a share also in the nature of the soul and in the perceptive faculties of the body, and with a susceptibility to pleasure and pain and to whatsoever other experience is incident to these mutations, and is the source of much disquiet in some and of less in others. For in demigods, as in men, there are divers degrees of virtue and vice.

The exploits of the Giants and Titans celebrated among the Greeks, the lawless deeds of a Cronus, the stubborn resistance of Python against Apollo, the flights of Dionysus, and the wanderings of Demeter, do not fall at all short of the exploits of Osiris and Typhon and other exploits which

anyone may hear freely repeated in traditional story. So, too, all the things which are kept always away from the ears and eyes of the multitude by being concealed behind mystic rites and ceremonies have a similar explanation.

(...)

27 Stories akin to these and to others like them they say are related about Typhon; how that, prompted by jealousy and hostility, he wrought terrible deeds and, by bringing utter confusion upon all things, filled the whole Earth, and the ocean as well, with ills, and later paid the penalty therefore.

But the avenger, the sister and wife of Osiris, after she had quenched and suppressed the madness and fury of Typhon, was not indifferent to the contests and struggles which she had endured, nor to her own wanderings nor to her manifold deeds of wisdom and many feats of bravery, nor would she accept oblivion and silence for them, but she intermingled in the most holy rites portrayals and suggestions and representations of her experiences at that time, and sanctified them, both as a lesson in godliness and an encouragement for men and women who find themselves in the clutch of like calamities.

She herself and Osiris, translated for their virtues from good demigods into gods, as were Heracles and Dionysus later, not incongruously enjoy double honours, both those of gods and those of demigods, and their powers extend everywhere, but are greatest in the regions above the earth and beneath the earth.

(...)

30 Now Osiris and Isis changed from good minor deities into gods. But the power of Typhon, weakened and crushed, but still fighting and struggling against extinction, they try to console and mollify by certain sacrifices; but again there are times when, at certain festivals, they humiliate and insult him by assailing red-headed men with jeering, and by throwing an ass {a donkey} over the edge of a precipice, as the people of Kopto do, because Typhon had red hair and in colour resembled an ass.

{This testimony by Plutarch is of great value, since it helps corroborate the view that the donkey was looked upon as being associated with Seth (Typhon). It indicates, moreover, that there may have been an element of truth in the ancient rumour that the “Judean” or “Israelite” religion somehow involved the veneration of donkeys. Here is a quote from my 2019 essay on the nature of the god (or gods) of the “Old Testament”:

While Horus was represented pictorially as having the head of a falcon, Seth was depicted as having the head of an animal with a curious, protruding snout and tall, pricked ears (Budge, 1969, k.l. 4964–4974). No one knows if an actual Egyptian animal, presently unknown to us, inspired the latter representation, but with a bit of imagination, it could be seen as reminiscent of the head of a very lean donkey – or even of the head of the aardvark, the African “earth pig” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998). That may, as we shall see, be significant. (Schilvold, 2024, p. 13)}

The people of Busiris and Lycopolis {ancient cities in Lower Egypt, in the Nile Delta} do not use trumpets at all, because these make a sound like an ass; and altogether they regard the ass as an unclean animal dominated by some higher power because of its resemblance to Typhon, and when they make cakes at their sacrifices in the month of Paÿni and of Phaophi they imprint upon them the device of an ass tied by a rope.

{Consider the crucial role played by *trumpets* in the taking of the city of Jericho – a conquest which ends in a *terrible massacre*:

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord [YHWH]. Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams’ horns [shofars] before the ark of the Lord [YHWH] went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the Lord [YHWH], while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the

trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the Lord [YHWH] has given you the city! Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord [YHWH] to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord [YHWH]; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord [YHWH].”

So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

(Joshua 6:12–21)

Our inclusion of these striking paragraphs from the Book of Joshua should not be taken to mean that we have arrived at the conclusion that the use of trumpets for the taking of Jericho is a veiled reference to Seth, because Plutarch reports that these instruments were thought of as making donkey-like sounds. Such a conclusion would not be warranted on the basis of these ancient stories alone, of course. But, considering what has come to light regarding the Cult of Seth in Avaris, the Capital of the Hyksos or Amu, and regarding the perceived link between Seth or Typhon and animals like the donkey and the pig, the special position of the shofar among the “Israelites” does seem a little *suspicious*, to put it that way, and when the pattern or procedure of conscious, polemical inversion of the beliefs and narratives of nations other than Israel which Amar Annus and others have shown beyond the shadow of a doubt to be recurring in the Tanakh is called to mind, one cannot but wonder: Does the Jericho narrative constitute a deliberate elevation of an instrument detested by the Egyptians? Moreover, did the authors actually have Jericho in mind, or could this narrative be designed to “counter” pharaoh Ahmose’s taking of the second Hyksos or Amu stronghold of Sharuhen, a heavily fortified city in Palestine, after a very long siege, and the infamy associated with that loss? The gruesome ending, i.e. the killing of virtually all the inhabitants of the ancient and venerable city of Jericho, including women and children and animals, is certainly in keeping with the terrible nature sometimes attributed to Seth or Typhon by the Egyptians – and very far from being compatible with the nature and the teachings of Christ. – E.S.}

{Plutarch continued:}

Moreover, in the sacrifice to the Sun they enjoin upon their worshippers not to wear any golden ornaments nor to give fodder to an ass.

It is plain that the adherents of Pythagoras hold Typhon to be a daemonic power; for they say that he was born in an even factor of fifty-six; and the dominion of the triangle belongs to Hades, Dionysus, and Ares, that of the quadrilateral to Rhea, Aphroditê, Demeter, Hestia, and Hera, that of the dodecagon to Zeus, that of a polygon of fifty-six sides to Typhon, as Eudoxus {Eudoxus of Cnidus; c. 395/390–342/337 B.C.} has recorded.

{C.f. Johnson and Pimpinelli, *Pegs and Ropes: Geometry at Stonehenge*

“We will never be able to prove that the construction proposed in [3], and discussed here, was actually used for crafting the template of the Aubrey Hole circuit. We will never know whether, as Hawkins suggested, the 56-sided polygon inside the bank of Stonehenge has anything to do with the polygon that, according to Plutarch, the Pythagoreans said belonged to Typhon [22], although the simple fact that this complex polygon was mentioned in Classical antiquity suggests that the knowledge of its construction belongs to even earlier times which may even hark back to the dawn of the pantheon of Indo-European tradition.”

(Johnson and Pimpinelli, 2008, p. 8)}

31 The Egyptians, because of their belief that Typhon was of a red complexion, also dedicate to sacrifice such of their neat cattle as are of a red colour, but they conduct the examination of these so scrupulously that, if an animal has but one hair black or white, they think it wrong to sacrifice it; for they regard as suitable for sacrifice not what is dear to the gods but the reverse, namely, such animals as have incarnate in them souls of unholy and unrighteous men who have been transformed into other bodies.

{It seems probable that this, the belief that red cattle are associated with Seth or Typhon, is the true origin of the law regarding the sacrificing of **red heifers** (young, virgin cows) in Numbers 19:

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying: ‘Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you **a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect** and on which a yoke has never come. You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin. And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them.

(Numbers 19:1–10)}

{Plutarch continued:}

For this reason they invoke curses on the head of the victim and cut it off, and in early times they used to throw it into the river, but now they sell it to aliens.

Upon the neat animal intended for sacrifice those of the priests who were called “Sealers” used to put a mark; and their seal, as Castor records, bore an engraving of a man with his knee on the ground and his hands tied behind his back, and with a sword at his throat.

They think, as has been said, that the ass reaps the consequences of his resemblance because of his stupidity and his lascivious behaviour no less than because of his colour.

This is also the reason why, since they hated Ochus most of all the Persian kings because he was a

detested and abominable ruler, they nicknamed him “the Ass”; and he remarked, “But this Ass will feast upon your Bull,” and slaughtered Apis, as Deinon has recorded.

But those who relate that **Typhon's flight from the battle was made on the back of an ass and lasted for seven days, and that after he had made his escape, he became the father of sons, Hierosolymus and Judaeus**, are manifestly, as the very names show, attempting to drag Jewish traditions into the legend.

{Knowing what we know today, we can say that this ancient legend, recorded by Plutarch, was no mere tale or fantasy, *but preserved a faint folk memory of the exodus of the Hyksos from Avaris*, of their association with Seth, and with one of the animals thought to represent him, the donkey, and of how the Hyksos, or some of their later descendants, eventually came to inhabit Jerusalem and Judea.}

(...)

32 (...). There is also a religious lament sung over Cronus. The lament is for him that is born in the regions on the left, and suffers dissolution in the regions on the right; for the Egyptians believe that the eastern regions are the face of the world, the northern the right, and the southern the left.

The Nile, therefore, which runs from the south and is swallowed up by the sea in the north, is naturally said to have its birth on the left and its dissolution on the right. For this reason the priests religiously keep themselves aloof from the sea, and call salt the “spume of Typhon”; and one of the things forbidden them is to set salt upon a table; also they do not speak to pilots, because these men make use of the sea, and gain their livelihood from the sea.

This is also not the least of the reasons why they eschew fish, and they portray hatred by drawing the picture of a fish.

At Saïs in the vestibule of the temple of Athena {Neith; c.f. Plato’s *Timaeus*} was carved a babe and an aged man, and after this a hawk, and next a fish, and finally an hippopotamus. The symbolic meaning of this was: “O ye that are coming into the world and departing from it, God hateth shamelessness.”

{The following is what Plato says of the city of Saïs and the cult of Neith in his *Timeaus* dialogue:

“Please tell us from the beginning,” said the other. “What was this ‘true story’ that Solon heard? How did he get to hear it? Who told him?”

“In Egypt,” Critias began, “in that part of the Delta where the [e] stream of the Nile divides around the vertex, there is a district called the Saitic. The most important city of this district is Sais. (This is also the city from which King Amasis came.) This city was founded by a goddess whose name was Neith in Egyptian and (according to the people there) Athena in Greek.

The inhabitants are very friendly to Athens and claim to be related to our people somehow or other.

Now Solon said that when he arrived there the people began to revere him.

Further, he said that when [22] he asked those priests of theirs who were scholars of antiquity about ancient times, he discovered that just about every Greek, including himself, was all but completely ignorant about such matters.

(Plato, 2000, 21d–22a)}

The babe is the symbol of coming into the world and the aged man the symbol of departing from it, and by a hawk they indicate God, by the fish hatred, as has already been said, because of the sea, and by the hippopotamus shamelessness; for it is said that he kills his sire and forces his mother to mate with him.

That saying of the adherents of Pythagoras, that the sea is a tear of Cronus, may seem to hint at its impure and extraneous nature.

Let this, then, be stated incidentally, as a matter of record that is common knowledge.

33 But the wiser of the priests call not only the Nile Osiris and the sea Typhon, but they simply give

the name of Osiris to the whole source and faculty creative of moisture, believing this to be the cause of generation and the substance of life-producing seed; and **the name of Typhon they give to all that is dry, fiery, and arid, in general, and antagonistic to moisture.**

Therefore, because they believe that he was personally of a reddish sallow colour {like that of a pig, perhaps}, they are not eager to meet men of such complexion, nor do they like to associate with them.

(...)

The bull kept at Heliopolis which they call Mneuis, and which is sacred to Osiris (some hold it to be the sire of Apis), is black and has honours second only to Apis. Egypt, moreover, which has the blackest of soils, they call by the same name as the black portion of the eye, “Chemia,” and compare it to a heart; for it is warm and moist and is enclosed by the southern portions of the inhabited world and adjoins them, like the heart in a man’s left side.

{Incidentally, the name Mneuis could be related to those of Menes and Manu (as Sir William Jones remarked, in his foreword to the *Manava Dharma Shastra*), and there are indications that Osiris refers to the same personage or protagonist as Dionysius, and that Dionysius is, likewise, simply another name for Manu. Consider, for example, the following:

“In the 13th book of the *Dionysiaca*, Dionysus is ordered by Zeus to prepare for war against the impious natives of India. Rhea, who had cared for Dionysus as a child, is ordered by the god to prepare troops for the conquest. In typical Homeric style, the epic poet provides the readers with a catalog of heroic and divine troops. The Dionysian army, made up of a large contingent of Bacchants or maenads, encounters the Indian troops led by one Astraeis. The Indian army is annihilated by the Bacchic forces, and Dionysus takes pity on his foes”
(Mackay, 2021)

Moreover, compare this to:

“During the Flood, Manu had led a party of survivors by boat up the Gangâ to the foothills of the Himâlaya, then founded his capital in Ayodhyâ. His son Ikshvâku founded the ‘solar dynasty’ which retained the city of Ayodhyâ. Ikshvâku’s descendant Râma, hero of the

Râmâyana epic, ruled there. The Buddha belonged to a minor branch of the same lineage, the Shakya clan which was so jealous of its noble ancestry that it practised the strictest endogamy.”

“So, Manu is known as the ancestor of all the Ârya people (vide §1.2), preceding all the quasi-historical events reported in Sanskrit literature. **The account by Seleucid Greek ambassador Megasthenes of Hindu royal genealogy, where Manu is identified with Dionysos, times his enthronement at 6776 BC** (Arrian: Indica 9.9, Pliny: Naturalis Historia 6.59, in Majumdar 1960 223 and 340), an intractable point of chronology that we must leave undecided for now.”

(Elst, 2019)

}

There is another tale current among the Egyptians that Apopis {or Apophis, or Apep(i)}, brother of the Sun, made war upon Zeus, and that because Osiris espoused Zeus’s cause and helped him to overthrow his enemy, Zeus adopted Osiris as his son and gave him the name of Dionysus.

{The other name of the Hyksos Pharaoh Apophis, *Auserre*, which, to our knowledge, is never used by native Egyptian pharaohs, could be viewed as meaning “Great and Powerful like Re”, and as asserting equality – but not necessarily identity – with Re/Ra (a personification of the Spiritual Power of the Sun).

Now, if the name Auserre is interpreted as an arrogant assertion of “brotherhood” with Re, as opposed to the more humble and pious assertion of being a representative of the Sun, or an incarnation of the Sun, a way of reconciling that name with the Cult of Seth known to have been prominent at Avaris, and with the vague legend preserved by Plutarch, has been found.

Hence, it is not *inconceivable* that the tale referred to by Plutarch has its origin in the real and historical person of Apophis, the Hyksos or Amu “Shepherd King” of Avaris. C.f. also Bietak, 1996, p. 40}

(...)

{Plutarch continued:}

The outmost parts of the land beside the mountains and bordering on the sea the Egyptians call Nephthys. This is why they give to Nephthys the name of “Finality,” and say that she is the wife of Typhon. Whenever, then, the Nile overflows and with abounding waters spreads far away to those who dwell in the outermost regions, they call this the union of Osiris with Nephthys, which is proved by the up-springing of the plants. Among these is the melilotus, by the wilting and failing of which, as the story goes, Typhon gained knowledge of the wrong done to his bed. So Isis gave birth to Horus in lawful wedlock, but Nephthys bore Anubis clandestinely.

However, in the chronological lists of the kings they record that Nephthys, after her marriage to Typhon, was at first barren. {C.f. Genesis 17:15; Sarai/Sarah} If they say this, not about a woman, but about the goddess, they must mean by it the utter barrenness and un-productivity of the earth resulting from a hard-baked soil.

(...)

40 When Isis recovered Osiris and was watching Horus grow up, as he was being made strong by the exhalations and mists and clouds, Typhon was vanquished but not annihilated; for the goddess who holds sway over the Earth would not permit the complete annihilation of the nature opposed to moisture, but relaxed and moderated it, being desirous that its tempering potency should persist, because it was not possible for a complete world to exist, if the fiery element left it and disappeared. **Even if this story were not current among them, one would hardly be justified in rejecting that other account, to the effect that Typhon, many ages ago, held sway over Osiris's domain;** for Egypt used to be all a sea, and, for that reason, even to-day it is found to have shells in its mines and mountains. Moreover, all the springs and wells, of which there are many, have a saline and brackish water, as if some stale dregs of the ancient sea had collected there.

(...)

44 (...) There are some who give the name of Typhon to the Earth's shadow, into which they believe the moon slips when it suffers eclipse.

45 Hence it is not unreasonable to say that the statement of each person individually is not right, but that the statement of all collectively is right; for it is not drought nor wind nor sea nor darkness, but everything harmful and destructive that Nature contains, which is to be set down as a part of Typhon.

The origins of the universe are not to be placed in inanimate bodies, according to the doctrine of Democritus and Epicurus, nor yet is the Artificer of undifferentiated matter, according to the Stoic doctrine, one Reason, and one Providence which gains the upper hand and prevails over all things.

{Start of a very interesting discourse by Plutarch on the Nature of the Cosmos, and its generation by way of opposites, the origins of Good and Evil, the struggle between these, certain mediators between them, the end of the world, and Pythagoras' and Plato's views on these matters; it is of great relevance to the struggle between Horus and Seth}

The fact is that it is impossible for anything bad whatsoever to be engendered where God is the Author of all, or anything good where God is the Author of nothing; for the concord of the universe, like that of a lyre or bow, according to Heracleitus, is resilient if disturbed; and according to Euripides,

“The good and bad cannot be kept apart,
But there is some commingling, which is well.”

Wherefore this very ancient opinion comes down from writers on religion and from lawgivers to poets and philosophers; it can be traced to no source, but it carried a strong and almost indelible conviction, and is in circulation in many places among barbarians and Greeks alike, not only in story and tradition but also in rites and sacrifices, to the effect that the Universe is not of itself suspended aloft without sense or reason or guidance, nor is there one Reason which rules and guides it by rudders, as it were, or by controlling reins, but, inasmuch as Nature brings, in this life of ours, many experiences in which both evil and good are commingled, or better, to put it very simply, Nature brings nothing which is not combined with something else, **we may assert that it is not one keeper of two great vases who, after the manner of a barmaid, deals out to us our failures and successes in mixture, but it has come about, as the result of two opposed principles and two antagonistic forces**, one of which guides us along a straight course to the right, while the other turns us aside and backward, that our life is complex, and so also is the universe;

and if this is not true of the whole of it, yet it is true that this terrestrial universe, including its moon as well, is irregular and variable and subject to all manner of changes.

For if it is the law of nature that nothing comes into being without a cause, and if the good cannot provide a cause for evil, then it follows that Nature must have in herself the source and origin of evil, just as she contains the source and origin of good.

46 The great majority and the wisest of men hold this opinion: they believe that there are two gods, rivals as it were, the one the Artificer of good and the other of evil. There are also those who call the better one a god and the other a daemon, as, for example, Zoroaster the sage, who, they record, lived five thousand years before the time of the Trojan War.

He called the one Oromazes and the other Areimanus; and he further declared that among all the things perceptible to the senses, Oromazes may best be compared to light, and Areimanus, conversely, to darkness and ignorance, and midway between the two is Mithras: for this reason the Persians give to Mithras the name of "Mediator."

Zoroaster has also taught that men should make votive offerings and thank-offerings to Oromazes, and averting and mourning offerings to Areimanus.

They pound up in a mortar a certain plant called omomi at the same time invoking Hades and Darkness; then they mix it with the blood of a wolf that has been sacrificed, and carry it out and cast it into a place where the sun never shines.

In fact, they believe that some of the plants belong to the good god and others to the evil daemon; so also of the animals they think that dogs, fowls, and hedgehogs, for example, belong to the good god, but that water-rats belong to the evil one; therefore the man who has killed the most of these they hold to be fortunate.

47 However, they also tell many fabulous stories about their gods, such, for example, as the following: Oromazes, born from the purest light, and Areimanus, born from the darkness, are constantly at war with each other; and Oromazes created six gods, the first of Good Thought, the second of Truth, the third of Order, and, of the rest, one of Wisdom, one of Wealth, and one the Artificer of Pleasure in what is Honourable.

But Areimanus created rivals, as it were, equal to these in number.

Then Oromazes enlarged himself to thrice his former size, and removed himself as far distant from the Sun as the Sun is distant from the Earth, and adorned the heavens with stars.

One star he set there before all others as a guardian and watchman, the Dog-star.

Twenty-four other gods he created and placed in an egg. But those created by Areimanus, who were equal in number to the others, pierced through the egg and made their way inside; hence evils are now combined with good.

But a destined time shall come when it is decreed that Areimanus, engaged in bringing on pestilence and famine, shall by these be utterly annihilated and shall disappear; and then shall the earth become a level plain, and there shall be one manner of life and one form of government for a blessed people who shall all speak one tongue.

Theopompus says that, according to the sages, one god is to overpower, and the other to be overpowered, each in turn for the space of three thousand years, and afterward for another three thousand years they shall fight and war, and the one shall undo the works of the other, and finally Hades shall pass away; then shall the people be happy, and neither shall they need to have food nor shall they cast any shadow.

And the god, who has contrived to bring about all these things, shall then have quiet and shall repose for a time, no long time indeed, but for the god as much as would be a moderate time for a man to sleep.

Such, then, is the character of the mythology of the sages.

48 The Chaldeans declare that of the planets, which they call tutelary gods, two are beneficent, two maleficent, and the other three are median and partake of both qualities.

The beliefs of the Greeks are well known to all; they make the good part to belong the Olympian Zeus and the abominated part to Hades, and they rehearse a legend that Concord is sprung from Aphroditê and Ares, the one of whom is harsh and contentious, and the other mild and tutelary.

Observe also that the philosophers are in agreement with these; for Heracleitus without reservation styles War “the Father and King and Lord of all,” and he says that when Homer prays that

“Strife may vanish from the ranks of the gods and of mortals”

he fails to note that he is invoking a curse on the origin of all things, since all things originate from strife and antagonism; also Heracleitus says that the Sun will not transgress his appropriate bounds, otherwise the stern-eyed maidens, ministers of Justice, will find him out.

Empedocles calls the beneficent principle “friendship” or “friendliness,” and oftentimes he calls Concord “sedate of countenance”; the worse principle he calls “accursed quarrelling” and “blood-stained strife.”

The adherents of Pythagoras include a variety of terms under these categories: under the good they set Unity, the Determinate, the Permanent, the Straight, the Odd, the Square, the Equal, the Right-handed, the Bright; under the bad they set Duality, the Indeterminate, the Moving, the Curved, the Even, the Oblong, the Unequal, the Left-handed, the Dark, on the supposition that these are the underlying principles of creation.

For these, however, Anaxagoras postulates Mind and Infinitude, Aristotle Form and Privation, and Plato, in many passages, as though obscuring and veiling his opinion, names the one of the opposite principles “Identity” and the other “Difference”; but in his Laws, when he had grown considerably older, he asserts, not in circumlocution or symbolically, but in specific words, that the movement of the Universe is actuated not by one soul, but perhaps by several, and certainly by not less than two, and of these the one is beneficent, and the other is opposed to it and the artificer of things opposed.

Between these he leaves a certain third nature, not inanimate nor irrational nor without the power to move of itself, as some think, but with dependence on both those others, and desiring the better always and yearning after it and pursuing it, as the succeeding portion of the treatise will make clear, in the endeavour to reconcile the religious beliefs of the Egyptians with this philosophy.

49 The fact is that the creation and constitution of this world is complex, resulting, as it does, from opposing influences, which, however, are not of equal strength, but the predominance rests with the better.

Yet it is impossible for the bad to be completely eradicated, since it is innate, in large amount, in the body and likewise in the soul of the Universe, and is always fighting a hard fight against the better. So in the soul Intelligence and reason, the Ruler and Lord of all that is good, is Osiris, and in earth and wind and water and the heavens and stars that which is ordered, established, and healthy, as evidenced by season, temperatures, and cycles of revolution, is the efflux of Osiris and his reflected image.

But Typhon is that part of the soul which is impressionable, impulsive, irrational and truculent, and of the bodily part the destructible, diseased and disorderly as evidenced by abnormal seasons and temperatures, and by obscurations of the sun and disappearances of the moon, outbursts, as it were, and unruly actions on the part of Typhon.

And the name “Seth,” by which they call Typhon, denotes this; it means “the overmastering” and “overpowering,” and it means in very many instances “turning back,” and again “overpassing.”

Some say that one of the companions of Typhon was Bebon, but Manetho says that Bebon was still another name by which Typhon was called.

{What Manetho actually says, according to Josephus (we cannot know if the quotes given by Josephus in his *Contra Apionem* polemical treatise are entirely trustworthy), is that Bebon – also known as **Beon, Bnon and Sheshy** – was the name of one of the Hyksos Pharaohs or “Shepherd Kings”:

“Thither [to Avaris] Salatis came in summer time: partly to gather his corn, and pay his soldiers their wages, and partly to exercise his armed men, and thereby to terrify foreigners. When this man had reigned nineteen years; after him reigned another whose name was Beon for forty four years; after him reigned another called Apachnas thirty six years and seven months; after him Apophis reigned sixty one years, and then Janias fifty years and one month; after all these reigned Assis forty nine years and two months. And these six were the

first rulers among them, who were all along making war with the Egyptians and were very desirous gradually to destroy them to the very roots. (...)"

However, since we now know that Avaris ("of the North", or "of the Delta") was a center of the Cult of Seth, or Baal (hence "Baal-Zephon"; "Ha-Var-is" or "Ha-Bal-is" "of the North"), or Typhon, it is quite possible that Bebon was a name for Seth as well, and that the Hyksos Pharaoh chose to name himself, or was named by those who named him, after Seth, just as Apophis, a later ruler of Avaris, refers to Apep, the great and terrible snake of Egyptian mythology. – E.S.}

The name signifies "restraint" or "hindrance," as much as to say that, when things are going along in a proper way and making rapid progress towards the right end, the power of Typhon obstructs them.

50 For this reason they assign to him the most stupid of the domesticated animals, the ass, and of the wild animals, the most savage, the crocodile and the hippopotamus {the "river pig"}. In regard to the ass we have already offered some explanation. At Hermopolis {Hermopolis Magna, Egyptian name Khmunu ("City of the Eight")}; an ancient city in Upper Egypt, and a center of the Cult of Thoth or Hermes} they point out a statue of Typhon in the form of an hippopotamus, on whose back is poised a hawk fighting with a serpent. By the hippopotamus they mean to indicate Typhon, and by the hawk a power and rule, which Typhon strives to win by force, oftentimes without success, being confused by his wickedness and creating confusion.

For this reason, when they offer sacrifice on the seventh day of the month Tybi, which they call the "Coming of Isis from Phoenicia," they imprint on their sacred cakes the image of an hippopotamus tied fast. In the town of Apollonopolis {likely Apollonopolis Magna, Egyptian name Wetjeset-hor ("hor" referring to Horus), the city of Edfu or Idfu in Upper Egypt, between Esna and Aswan} it is an established custom for every person without exception to eat of a crocodile; and on one day they hunt as many as they can and, after killing them, cast them down directly opposite the temple. And they relate that Typhon escaped Horus by turning into a crocodile, and they would make out that all animals and plants and incidents that are bad and harmful are the deeds and parts and movements of Typhon.

(...)

54 It is not, therefore, out of keeping that they have a legend that the soul of Osiris is everlasting and imperishable, but that his body Typhon oftentimes dismembers and causes to disappear, and that Isis wanders hither and yon in her search for it, and fits it together again; for that which really is and is perceptible and good is superior to destruction and change.

The images from it with which the sensible and corporeal is impressed, and the relations, forms, and likenesses which this take upon itself, like impressions of seals in wax, are not permanently lasting, but disorder and disturbance overtakes them, being driven hither from the upper reaches, and fighting against Horus, whom Isis brings forth, beholden of all, as the image of the perceptible world.

Therefore it is said that **he is brought to trial by Typhon on the charge of illegitimacy**, as not being pure nor uncontaminated like his father, reason unalloyed and unaffected of itself, but contaminated in his substance because of the corporeal element.

He prevails, however, and wins the case when Hermes, that is to say Reason, testifies and points out that Nature, by undergoing changes of form with reference to the perceptible, duly brings about the creation of the world.

The birth of Apollo {or Horus} from Isis and Osiris, while these gods were still in the womb of Rhea, has the allegorical meaning that before this world was made visible and its rough material was completely formed by reason, it was put to the test by Nature and brought forth of itself the first creation imperfect.

This is the reason why they say that this god was born in the darkness a cripple, and they call him the elder Horus; for there was then no world, but only an image and outline of a world to be.

55 But this Horus is himself perfected and complete; but he has not done away completely with Typhon, but has taken away his activity and strength.

Hence they say that at Kopto the statue of Horus holds in one hand the privy members of Typhon, and they relate a legend that Hermes cut out the sinews of Typhon, and used them as strings for his lyre, thereby instructing us that Reason adjusts the Universe and creates

concord out of discordant elements, and that it does not destroy but only cripples the destructive force.

(...)

57 It might appear that Hesiod, in making the very first things of all to be Chaos and Earth and Tartarus and Love, did not accept any other origins but only these, if we transfer the names somewhat and assign to Isis the name of Earth and to Osiris the name of Love and to Typhon the name of Tartarus; for the poet seems to place Chaos at the bottom as a sort of region that serves as a resting-place for the Universe.

This subject seems in some wise to call up the myth of Plato, which Socrates in the Symposium gives at some length in regard to the birth of Love, saying that Poverty, wishing for children, insinuated herself beside Plenty while he was asleep, and having become pregnant by him, gave birth to Love, who is of a mixed and utterly variable nature, inasmuch as he is the son of a father who is good and wise and self-sufficient in all things, but of a mother who is helpless and without means and because of want always clinging close to another and always importunate over another. For Plenty is none other than the first beloved and desired, the perfect and self-sufficient; and Plato calls raw material Poverty, utterly lacking of herself in the Good, but being filled from him and always yearning for him and sharing with him. The World, or Horus, which is born of these, is not eternal nor unaffected nor imperishable, but, being ever reborn, contrives to remain always young and never subject to destruction in the changes and cycles of events.

62 Like these also are the Egyptian beliefs; for they oftentimes call Isis by the name of Athena, expressive of some such idea as this, “I came of myself,” which is indicative of self-impelled motion. **Typhon, as has been said, is named Seth and Bebon and Smu, and these names would indicate some forcible and preventive check or opposition or reversal.**

{It seems that Plutarch is remembering his previous statements somewhat incorrectly here – he has indeed mentioned the name Seth many times, and the name Bebon has been given twice, in a paragraph in 49, but that Smu is also a name for Seth or Typhon has not been stated earlier.}

{As regards Plutarch’s mention of Smu as an alternative name for Seth, it is interesting to note that one of the items so far uncovered in the ruins of Avaris, i.e. at the Tell el-Dab’ā archaeological site,

is an amphora with “a stamp on its handle bearing the inscription (...) “the prince, Shimw” (...). According to neutron activation analysis this amphora was produced in southern Palestine.” (Bietak, 1996, p. 60)

As some will be aware of already, this name found on an amphora, “Shimw”, can be transliterated into English as “Shimoo”, since the w or “waw” represents the “oo”-sound (sometimes also represented with the letter “u”). As soon as we do that, the possible kinship between Plutarch’s “Smu” and the “Shimoo” recorded on the vase discovered in the City of Seth, as one might call it, becomes perfectly clear. Considering the fact that Manetho claims that Bebon (Beon), the other curious name Plutarch says was applied to Seth, was the name of a Hyksos ruler, it does not seem unlikely that the “prince” (whoever he was) named Shimoo *also* had a name referring to Seth (who is also, in a sense, a prince, of course, since he is a deity), and that this Shimoo, therefore, is indeed Plutarch’s Smu.

But we could go even further than that. Shimoo sounds a great deal like a name many of us are already familiar with from the Bible, as well as from current affairs, namely Simon! This is an English rendering of the Greek version of the actual “Hebrew” or Semitic name, however, which is even more similar to Shimoo, namely Shim’on (Genesis 29:33). Since the “o” in the “Hebrew” is actually a long one (as in “awe”), the only substantial difference between the two names is the n at the end of the “Hebrew” one. Shimon Peres is probably the most famous person in modern times to have carried this name. Whether Shimon (or Shimoona) was once a designation for Seth cannot be determined at present, however, due to the lack of evidence.}

Moreover, they {the Egyptians} call the loadstone {or lodestone, a naturally magnetized piece of the mineral magnetite, sometimes used as compasses in olden times} the bone of Horus, and iron the bone of Typhon, as Manetho records. For, as the iron oftentimes acts as if it were being attracted and drawn toward the stone, and oftentimes is rejected and repelled in the opposite direction, in the same way the salutary and good and rational movement of the world at one time, by persuasion, attracts and draws toward itself and renders more gentle that harsh and Typhonian movement, and then again it gathers itself together and reverses it and plunges it into difficulties.

{Here the notion that the future Israelite or “Jewish” Messiah is expected to terrorize or destroy the nations and to govern the world with “a rod of iron” might be of some relevance. Psalm 2, for example, proclaims that

“Ask of Me, and I will give You
The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.
You shall break them with **a rod of iron**;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

(Psalm 2:8–9; c.f. also the gruesome scene painted in Isaiah 63:1–6, for example)

A rod of iron is also mentioned several times in the Christian Book of Revelation. Here is one example:

“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ – as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.”

(Revelation 2:26–28)}

(...)

63 The sistrum (rattle) also makes it clear that all things in existence need to be shaken, or rattled about, and never to cease from motion but, as it were, to be waked up and agitated when they grow drowsy and torpid. **They say that they avert and repel Typhon by means of the sistru**ms, indicating thereby that when destruction constricts and checks Nature, generation releases and arouses it by means of motion.

64 To put the matter briefly, it is not right to believe that water or the sun or the earth or the sky is Osiris or Isis; or again that fire or drought or the sea is Typhon, but simply if we attribute to Typhon whatever there is in these that is immoderate and disordered by reason of

excesses or defects; and if we revere and honour what is orderly and good and beneficial as the work of Isis and as the image and reflection and reason of Osiris, we shall not be wrong.

(...)

{Plutarch's commendable conclusion, where he explains that the gods are universal}

In the second place, and this is a matter of greater importance, they should exercise especial heed and caution lest they unwittingly erase and dissipate things divine into winds and streams and sowings and ploughings, developments of the earth and changes of the seasons, as do those who regard wine as Dionysus and flame as Hephaestus. And Cleanthes (331/330–232/231 B.C., a prominent Stoic philosopher) says somewhere that the breath of air which is carried (pheromenon) through the crops and then suffers dissolution (phoneuomenon) is Phersephone; and a certain poet has written with reference to the reapers,

Then when the sturdy youth come to sever the limbs of Demeter.

The fact is that these persons do not differ at all from those who regard sails and ropes and anchor as a pilot, warp and woof as a weaver, a cup or an honey mixture or barley gruel as a physician. But they create in men fearful atheistic opinions by conferring the names of gods upon natural objects which are senseless and inanimate, and are of necessity destroyed by men when they need to use them.

It is impossible to conceive of these things as being gods in themselves;

67 for God is not senseless nor inanimate nor subject to human control. As a result of this we have come to regard as gods those who make use of these things and present them to us and provide us with things everlasting and constant.

Nor do we think of the gods as different gods among different peoples, nor as barbarian gods and Greek gods, nor as southern and northern gods; but, just as the sun and the moon and the heavens and the earth and the sea are common to all, but are called by different names by different peoples, so for that one rationality which keeps all these things in order and the one Providence which watches over them and the ancillary powers that are set over all, there have

arisen among different peoples, in accordance with their customs, different honours and appellations.

(...)

Plutarch, Priest of Apollo or the Sun at Delphi

Excerpts dealing with Phoenicia, Judea, Moses and the “Jews”, from Strabo’s Geography, ch. 16

Please note: The archaic spellings “Phœnicia” and “Phœnicians” have been replaced by “Phoenicia” and “Phoenicians”

Commencement of direct quotes

(...). Next to Sidon is Tyre, the largest and most ancient city of the Phoenicians. This city is the rival of Sidon in magnitude, fame, and antiquity, as recorded in many fables. For although poets have celebrated Sidon more than Tyre (Homer, however, does not even mention Tyre), yet **the colonies sent into Africa and Spain, as far as, and beyond the Pillars**, extol much more the glory of Tyre.

Both however were formerly, and are at present, distinguished and illustrious cities, but which of the two should be called the capital of Phoenicia is a subject of dispute among the inhabitants. Sidon is situated upon a fine naturally-formed harbour on the mainland. [23] Tyre is wholly an island, built nearly in the same manner as Aradus {or Arvad, another ancient Phoenician city}. It is joined to the continent by a mound, which Alexander raised, when he was besieging it. It has two harbours, one close, the other open, which is called the Egyptian harbour.

The houses here, it is said, consist of many stories, of more even than at Rome; on the occurrence, therefore, of an earthquake, the city was nearly demolished. It sustained great injury when it was taken by siege by Alexander, but it rose above these misfortunes, and recovered itself both by **the skill of the people in the art of navigation, in which the Phoenicians in general have always excelled all nations**, and by (the export of) purple-dyed manufactures, the Tyrian purple being in the highest estimation.

The shellfish from which it is procured is caught near the coast, and the Tyrians have in great abundance other requisites for dyeing. The great number of dyeing works renders the city unpleasant as a place of residence, but the superior skill of the people in the practice of this art is the source of its wealth.

Their independence was secured to them at a small expense to themselves, not only by the kings of Syria, but also by the Romans, who confirmed what the former had conceded.

They pay extravagant honours to Hercules.

The great number and magnitude of their colonies and cities are proofs of their maritime skill and power.

Such then are the Tyrians. [24]

The Sidonians are said by historians to excel in various kinds of art, as the words of Homer also imply. Besides, they cultivate science and study astronomy and arithmetic, to which they were led by the application of numbers (in accounts) and night sailing, each of which (branches of knowledge) concerns the merchant and seaman; in the same manner the Egyptians were led to the invention of geometry by the mensuration of ground, which was required in consequence of the Nile confounding, by its overflow, the respective boundaries of the country.

It is thought that geometry was introduced into Greece from Egypt, and astronomy and arithmetic from Phoenicia. At present the best opportunities are afforded in these cities of acquiring a knowledge of these, and of all other branches of philosophy.

If we are to believe Poseidonius, the ancient opinion about atoms originated with Mochus, a native of Sidon, who lived before the Trojan times.

Let us, however, dismiss subjects relating to antiquity. In my time there were distinguished philosophers, natives of Sidon, as Boethus, with whom I studied the philosophy of Aristotle, and Diodotus, his brother.

Antipater was of Tyre, and a little before my time Apollonius, who published a table of the philosophers of the school of Zeno, and of their writings.

Tyre is distant from Sidon not more than 200 stadia. Between the two is situated a small town, called Ornithopolis, (the city of birds); next a river which empties itself near Tyre into the sea.

Next after Tyre is Palæ-tyrus (ancient Tyre), at the distance of 30 stadia. [25]

{William Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography* (1854) has the following to say of Palae-Tyre:

That part of the city which lay on the mainland was called Palae-Tyrus, or Old Tyre; an appellation from which we necessarily infer that it existed previously to the city on the island; and this inference is confirmed by Ezekiel's prophetical description of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the particulars of which are not suitable to an island city. Palae-Tyrus extended along the shore from the river Leontes on the N., to the fountain of Ras-el-Ain on the S., a space of 7 miles; which, however, must have included the suburbs. When Strabo says (xvi. p. 758) that Palae-Tyrus was 30 stadia, or 3 3/4 miles, distant from Tyre, he is probably considering the southern extremity of the former. Pliny (l.c.) assigns a circumference of 19 miles to the two cities.

The plain in which Palae-Tyrus was situated was one of the broadest and most fertile in Phoenicia. The fountain above mentioned afforded a constant supply of pure spring water, which was received into an octagon reservoir, 60 feet in diameter and 18 feet deep. Into this reservoir the water gushes to within 3 feet of the top. (Maundrell, Journey, p. 67.) Hence it was distributed through the town by means of an aqueduct, all trace of which has now disappeared (Robinson, Palest. iii. p. 684.)

The unusual contrast between the bustle of a great seaport and the more tranquil operations of rural life in the fertile fields which surrounded the town, presented a striking scene which is described with much felicity in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus (40, 327, sqq.).

Source:

<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0064:entry=tyrus-geo>

}

Then follows Ptolemaïs, a large city, formerly called Ace. It was the place of rendezvous for the Persians in their expeditions against Egypt.

Between Ace and Tyre is a sandy beach, the sand of which is used in making glass. The sand, it is said, is not fused there, but carried to Sidon to undergo that process. Some say that the Sidonians have, in their own country, the vitrifiable sand; according to others, the sand of every place can be fused. I heard at Alexandria from the glass-workers, that there is in Egypt a kind of vitrifiable earth, without which expensive works in glass of various colours could not be executed, but in other countries other mixtures are required; and at Rome, it is reported, there have been many inventions both for producing various colours, and for facilitating the manufacture, as for example in glass wares, where a glass bowl may be purchased for a copper coin, and glass is ordinarily used for drinking. [26]

A phenomenon of the rarest kind is said to have occurred on the shore between Tyre and Ptolemaïs. The people of Ptolemaïs had engaged in battle with Sarpedon the general {Sarpedon was also a son of Zeus, and, in one tradition, a brother of King Minos of Crete}, and after a signal defeat were left in this place, when a wave from the sea, like the rising tide, overwhelmed the fugitives; some were carried out to sea and drowned, others perished in hollow places; then again the ebb succeeding, uncovered and displayed to sight the bodies lying in confusion among dead fish.

{Comment: The editor of Brugsch's *A History of Egypt under the Pharaohs* seems to be suggesting that this tradition, related by Strabo, could in fact be memory of or the inspiration for the similar part of the biblical Exodus narrative. See the excerpts from the "Additions and Notes: Notes on the Exodus" section of that work, provided elsewhere in this treatise of ours. – E.S.}

(...)

Next to Ace is the Tower of Strato, with a station for vessels. Between these places is Mount Carmel, and cities of which nothing but the names remain, as Sycaminopolis, Bucolopolis, Crocodeilopolis, and others of this kind; next is a large forest. [28]

Then Joppa, where the coast of Egypt, which at first stretches towards the east, makes a remarkable bend towards the north. In this place, according to some writers, Andromeda was exposed to the sea-monster.

It is sufficiently elevated; it is said to command a view of Jerusalem, the capital of the Jews,

who, when they descended to the sea, used this place as a naval arsenal. But the arsenals of robbers are the haunts of robbers.

Carmel, and the forest, belonged to the Jews.

The district was so populous that the neighbouring village Iamneia, and the settlements around, could furnish forty thousand soldiers.

Thence to Casium, near Pelusium, are little more than 1000 stadia, and 1300 to Pelusium itself. [29]

In the interval is Gadaris, which the Jews have appropriated to themselves, then Azotus and Ascalon.

From Iamneia to Azotus and Ascalon are about 200 stadia.

The country of the Ascalonitee produces excellent onions; the town is small. Antiochus the philosopher, who lived a little before our time, was a native of this place. Philodemus the Epicurean was a native of Gadara, as also Meleagrus, Menippus the satirist, and Theodorus the rhetorician, my contemporary. [30]

(...)

The western extremities of Judæa towards Casius are occupied by Idumæans {or Idumaeans}, and by the lake [Sirbonis]. The Idumæans are Nabatæans {or Nabataeans}. When driven from their country by sedition, they passed over to the Jews, and adopted their customs.

The greater part of the country along the coast to Jerusalem is occupied by the Lake Sirbonis, and by the tract contiguous to it; for Jerusalem is near the sea, which, as we have said, may be seen from the arsenal of Joppa.

{Comment: It seems that Lake Sirbonis here refers not to the Dead Sea, but to an extensive region of treacherous marshlands and a lake or lagoon between the Nile Delta and Gaza, on the northernmost part of the Sinai Peninsula. Herodotus called the location the Serbonian Bog, and today the lake is known as Bardawil. (See https://www.wikiwand.com/en/articles/Serbonian_Bog)}

These districts (of Jerusalem and Joppa) lie towards the north; they are inhabited generally, and each place in particular, by mixed tribes of Egyptians, Arabians, and Phoenicians.

Of this description are the inhabitants of Galilee, of the plain of Jericho, and of the territories of Philadelphia and Samaria, surnamed Sebaste by Herod; but although there is such a mixture of inhabitants, the report most credited, [one] among many things believed respecting the temple [and the inhabitants] of Jerusalem, is, that **the Egyptians were the ancestors of the present Jews.** [35]

An Egyptian priest named Moses, who possessed a portion of the country called the Lower [Egypt] * * * *, being dissatisfied with the established institutions there, left it and came to Judæa with a large body of people who worshipped the Divinity.

He declared and taught that the Egyptians and Africans entertained erroneous sentiments, in representing the Divinity under the likeness of wild beasts and cattle of the field; that the Greeks also were in error in making images of their gods after the human form.

For God [said he] may be this one thing which encompasses us all, land and sea, which we call heaven, or the universe, or the nature of things. Who then of any understanding would venture to form an image of this Deity, resembling anything with which we are conversant?

On the contrary, we ought not to carve any images, but to set apart some sacred ground and a shrine worthy of the Deity, and to worship Him without any similitude.

He taught that those who made fortunate dreams were to be permitted to sleep in the temple, where they might dream both for themselves and others; that those who practised temperance and justice, and none else, might expect good, or some gift or sign from the God, from time to time. [36]

By such doctrine Moses persuaded a large body of right-minded persons to accompany him to the place where Jerusalem now stands. He easily obtained possession of it, as the spot was not such as to excite jealousy, nor for which there could be any fierce contention; for it is rocky, and, although well supplied with water, it is surrounded by a barren and waterless territory.

The space within [the city] is 60 stadia [in circumference], with rock underneath the surface.

Instead of arms, he taught that their defence was in their sacred things and the Divinity, for whom he was desirous of finding a settled place, promising to the people to deliver such a kind of worship and religion as should not burthen those who adopted it with great expense, nor molest them with [so-called] divine possessions, nor other absurd practices.

Moses thus obtained their good opinion, and established no ordinary kind of government. All the nations around willingly united themselves to him, allured by his discourses and promises. [37]

His successors continued for some time to observe the same conduct, doing justly, and worshipping God with sincerity. Afterwards superstitious persons were appointed to the priesthood, and then tyrants.

From superstition arose abstinence from flesh, from the eating of which it is now the custom to refrain, circumcision, excision, and other practices which the people observe.

The tyrannical government produced robbery; for the rebels plundered both their own and the neighbouring countries. Those also who shared in the government seized upon the property of others, and ravaged a large part of Syria and of Phoenicia.

Respect, however, was paid to the Acropolis; it was not abhorred as the seat of tyranny, but honoured and venerated as a temple.

{Comment: This has to be a reference to a temple in Jerusalem. – E.S.}

This is according to nature, and common both to Greeks and barbarians. For, as members of a civil community, they live according to a common law; otherwise it would be impossible for the mass to execute any one thing in concert (in which consists a civil state), or to live in a social state at all.

Law is twofold, divine and human. The ancients regarded and respected divine, in preference to human, law; in those times, therefore, the number of persons was very great who consulted oracles, and, being desirous of obtaining the advice of Jupiter, hurried to Dodona, to hear the answer of Jove from the lofty oak. The parent went to Delphi, anxious to learn whether the child which had been exposed (to die) was still living; while the child itself was gone to the temple of Apollo, with the hope of discovering its parents.

And Minos among the Cretans, the king who in the ninth year enjoyed converse with Great Jupiter, every nine years, as Plato says, ascended to the cave of Jupiter, received ordinances from him, and conveyed them to men.

Lycurgus, his imitator, acted in a similar manner; for he was often accustomed, as it seemed, to leave his own country to inquire of the Pythian goddess what ordinances he was to promulgate to the Lacedæmonians. [39]

What truth there may be in these things I cannot say; they have at least been regarded and believed as true by mankind. Hence prophets received so much honour as to be thought worthy even of thrones, because they were supposed to communicate ordinances and precepts from the gods, both during their lifetime and after their death; as for example Teiresias,

‘to whom alone Proserpine gave wisdom and understanding after death: the others flit about as shadows.’ Od. xix. 494.

Such were Amphiaraus, Trophonius, Orpheus, and Musæus: in former times there was Zamolxis, a Pythagorean, who was accounted a god among the Getæ {or Getae; possibly the Goths}; and in our time, Decæneus, the diviner of Byrebistas.

Among the Bosporani, there was Achaicarus; among the Indians, were the Gymnosopists; among the Persians, the Magi and Necyomanteis, and besides these the Lecanomanteis and Hydromanteis; among the Assyrians, were the Chaldæans; and among the Romans, the Tyrrhenian diviners of dreams.

Such was Moses and his successors; their beginning was good, but they degenerated. [40]

End of excerpts from Strabo (1903, Book XVI, Chapter II)

Appendix

Indications of a great plague when the "Proto-Israelites" (the Amu (Aamu) and their "Hyksos" monarchs) were in Egypt – but one afflicting the "Proto-Israelites" (interestingly enough), not the native Egyptians (excerpt from Manfred Bietak's 1996 report, *Avaris: Capital of the Hyksos*)

"Over the course of this period, the settlement (Tell el-Dab'a/Avaris) expanded considerably but suffered a crisis near its end. Tombs found in excavation areas F/I and A/II, areas which are more than 500 m apart from each other, were obviously emergency graves. Some of them are merely pits into which bodies were thrown. Most were without offerings. We think the evidence suggests that an epidemic swept through the town. It may have been the bubonic plague, perhaps the disease referred to as 'Asiatic disease' in the medical papyri of the early 18th Dynasty. It is possible that the plague acquired this name as it raged within this Asiatic community in the Delta. However, this is speculation as there is, as yet, no scientific evidence for such a plague." (Bietak, 1996, p. 35)

Comment: This would seem to reverse the famous picture painted of the plagues in the Book of Exodus. If Bietak's supposition be correct, then it seems possible that the Biblical or Torah narrative involving various plagues constitutes yet another instance of the sort of deliberate, polemical inversion of history and tradition which Amar Annus has shown to be present in the Book of Genesis, and which we may, when considering what we now know about Egypt and its civilization, deem to *permeate* the Exodus narrative.

Male population of the City of Avaris not native Egyptian, and presumably Semitic (or "Phoenician"), even before the Second Intermediate or "Hyksos" period (excerpt from Manfred Bietak's 1996 report, *Avaris: Capital of the Hyksos*)

"The male population of the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period at Tell el-Dab'a was not of Egyptian origin, according to Winkler. The closest physical affinities are to be found within the population of the Levant, a very close similarity being noted to the

inhabitants of the Iron Age cemetery at Kamid el Loz. It is interesting that the female population type is very different and seems to have been of local origin. The social pattern of male immigrants acquiring local wives is typical for mercenaries or sailors in employment abroad. The major problem for further research remains the scarcity of well preserved and well documented osteological material.” (Bietak, 1996, p. 36)

The Great Temple of Seth (“Typhon”) in Avaris (with donkey sacrifices right outside it) – could this be the historical reality that inspired the creation of the “Temple of Solomon” myth of the Tanakh? (Excerpt from Manfred Bietak’s 1996 report, *Avaris: Capital of the Hyksos*)

“While the centre of the settlement at F/I continued to be inhabited, in the eastern part of the settlement, in area A/II (Fig. 27), occupation came to a temporary halt after stratum G (before c. 1700 BC). **Settlement areas were converted into cemeteries, which soon spread to surround a large, newly constructed temple** (III) of Middle Bronze Age type (stratum F). **This major temple (Figs 30–1 ; Plate 13, B) is one of the largest sanctuaries known from the Middle Bronze Age world, being about 30 m long. It was painted blue;** thus it was probably dedicated to a cosmic god.

In front of it was found a rectangular altar from which a bunch of acorns was retrieved (Fig. 31; Plate 14, A–C). This may be an indication of a tree cult (Asherah, cf Judges G:25, 28, 30). To the southeast of the altar one or two pits may be identified as purpose-dug tree-pits. The arrangement suggests that the trees provided shade for the altar. Perhaps the acorns fell from one of these trees.

{But note the great importance assigned to the oak or terebinth tree (the “Hebrew” term is “elon”) in Genesis, and how “the oaks of Mamre” are associated with YHWH, and with his hierophanies:

“Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to YHWH.” (Genesis 13:18)

“Then YHWH appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed

himself to the ground, and said, ‘My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.’” (Genesis 18:1–2)

}

In the forecourt surrounding the altar offering-pits were also excavated, which contained numerous and varied fragments of pottery and calcinated cattle bones. **No pig bones were found, possibly indicating that the Canaanite settlers already had some sort of taboo concerning the consumption of pig meat**, at least as a temple offering.” (Bietak, 1996, p. 36)

In two other pits, in front of the temple, pairs of donkeys were found (Plate 15, A-B). This time the donkeys were not associated with burials. One should recall that within the Mari correspondence the expression ‘to butcher a donkey’ was synonymous for making a treaty. Thus, it is probable that treaty negotiations were concluded with the sacrifice of donkeys, which were interred within round pits in front of the temple.

A similar pit containing sacrificed donkeys has been found recently by Oren at Tel Haror within Nahal Gerar in southern Palestine.

Within and near the precinct of the main temple, III, two door jambs of limestone were found, unfortunately in disturbed contexts. Both are inscribed with the names of King Aa-zeh-Re Nehesy, who was most probably a ruler of the early 14th Dynasty. It seems that his father, probably a high-ranking Egyptian official, had founded a small independent kingdom in the north-eastern Delta.

Although the father's name is unknown to us, he does not seem to have been of Asiatic origin. His son, Nehesy, who reigned only for a short time, left a scatter of monuments in the eastern Delta – at Bubastis, Tell el-Dab'a and Tell el-Habwa-East (Fig. 33). This distribution roughly corresponds to the extent of the Middle Bronze Age sites in the eastern Nile Delta (Fig. 34).

Monuments of Nehesy at Tell el-Muqdam and Tanis were no doubt moved there later from Avaris.

As Temple III is the only monumental building which dates approximately to this period, it seems likely that the jambs came from this temple, although we cannot be absolutely sure.

On the western flank of this sacred complex there was a second temple (II), a ‘Breithaustempel’ of old Near Eastern tradition (Figs 30 and 32; Plate 16, A-B). It had a double entrance from a courtyard and its sanctuary was to the left of the axis. This temple also had a tower. On the other side of Temple III stood a third temple (V) (Fig. 30; Plate 17, A-B), which also had an altar in front of it. This temple, however, has an Egyptian layout and should be considered a mortuary temple (see below).

We know that the settlement was now called Avaris (Hwt-wrt), ‘the (royal) foundation of the district’. During the reign of King Nehesy (c. 1710 BC) it became the capital of a small kingdom which should be considered as a part of the 14th Dynasty. The dynasty obviously relied heavily on the Asiatic settlers in the region.

(...)

In one of the cemeteries surrounding Temple III, we found the tomb of a deputy treasurer (...) named ‘Amu (= ‘the Asiatic’) (...). This burial was indeed Asiatic. The body was interred in a contracted position and equipped with a Syro-Palestinian chisel-shaped battleaxe of late MBIIA type and a triangular dagger with a mid-rib (Fig. 35, 2-3).

Besides pottery of Egyptian type, we also found early types of Tell el-Yahudiya ware (Fig. 35, 4) deposited as offerings. **In front of the tomb not just two but at least five and probably six donkeys had been buried.** It is inconceivable that under normal conditions a deputy treasurer would have resided in a provincial town like Avaris. It was only after the secession of the dynasty of Nehesy from the kingdom of the 13th Dynasty that such a situation could have been expected to arise.

This high office was, of course, now reduced to very local dimensions. **The outfit of this tomb was, however, by local standards, very remarkable indeed. It is thus far the tomb containing the greatest number of sacrificed donkeys. As stated above, in our view, owners of tombs with donkey sacrifices were involved in the business of expeditions.** The sacrifice of donkeys would make sense in this case as the deputy treasurer would have been responsible for obtaining the crown's share of the commodities attained by trading expeditions.

(Bietak, 1996, pp. 40–41)

A sudden influx of Semites from the Levant into Egypt in the 1700s B.C. (excerpt from Manfred Bietak's 1996 report, *Avaris: Capital of the Hyksos*)

"The sudden increase of Middle Bronze Age types from stratum G/4 to stratum G/1-3 is surely very significant, suggesting an influx of new elements from the Levant into Egypt. This influx took place after 1750 BC, that is, during the advanced 13th Dynasty. It would appear that the Egyptian crown was either in need of more people from the Levant to serve as soldiers, seamen, shipbuilders and craftsmen or was unable to control the influx of population from the Levant – in either case with undoubtedly effect on the political situation in north-eastern Egypt. Ceramics may also help to illuminate the origins of the Asiatic population of Tell el-Dab'a. Very important is the typology of Tell el-Yahudiya ware. 74 The stratigraphy of Tell el-Dab'a makes it possible to study the different types of this ware and their development (Fig. 46; Plates 22-3). Tell el-Yahudiya ware seems to have originated in northern Palestine and the area around Byblos, where the oldest specimens of this pottery have been found (Fig. 47). This ware was imported into Tell el-Dab'a from the early 13th Dynasty (stratum d/1) onwards and soon spread further south until it reached the Kingdom of Kush in present-day northern Sudan." (Bietak, 1996, p. 55)

Quote from my "The Old Testament understanding of God" essay (2019):

"In a similar omission of what to us seems like an important point, the report on Avaris goes into considerable detail regarding the numerous discoveries of buried donkeys in the city – including pairs of donkeys interred in front of one of the major temples (Bietak, 1996, p. 25, pp. 40–41) – *but never considers the fact that the donkey was closely associated with Seth.*

Granted, the report discusses various other possible motivations for the ritual slaughtering of donkeys, such as its importance to caravan trade (p. 25) and the making of treaties (p. 40). Still, since the donkey, rather unsurprisingly, appears to have been seen as a kind of incarnation of Seth, or as belonging to Seth – as ancient authors such as Plutarch demonstrate (Budge, 1969, k.l. 5139 – 5171), and as Egyptian archaeological finds provide some confirmation of (k.l. 5171–5176) – it seems to us that some mention of this would have been warranted."

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